2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

872 779 on the whole future life of the young scholars. As long as these monastic schools are attended, all attacks on the Buddhist faith must be fruitless.

872 779 792 Besides the commandments, the paya-shekho, and the pareit-yôp-thi, the lauds of the Lord Buddha, and the aspirations to be repeated at the holy shrines, the formulæ to be told over on the beads; besides these first principles, the young Burman is taught the thin-ki-ya, the rules which are to prepare him for assuming the yellow robe, and to guide him during his longer or shorter withdrawal from the sinful world to the calm tranquillity of the monastery. He must learn that the young novice carefully imitates the decorous pace of the yahan; does not walk fast; avoids swinging his hands; does not smile or laugh in passing through a village, and keeps far away from all secular amuse-
[292] ments. The yellow robe, distinctive of the order, is to be regarded not as a garment to cherish and comfort the wearer, not as a robe to adorn the outward man and make it look stately or pious, but merely as a concession to modesty, born of the weaknesses of poor human flesh—and further, as a means of enabling the worthless frame to endure the
[241] extremes of heat and cold. In the same way food is to be eaten only to support life. The member of the sacred order must not think of meal times as an occasion for gratifying his senses; he must avoid dwelling on the tastiness of the food and the gratification to his palate which the pious zeal of a supporter may afford in presenting an unusually dainty meal. Especially must he refrain from eating food to make himself strong and lusty. He must always remember the transitoriness, the misery and unreality of the world, and find relief in the Triple Consolation, the trust in the Lord, the Law, and the Assembly.

All these things are impressed on the young pupil as soon as he is able to read at all, every one of them assuming the fact that as soon as he is old enough, or as soon as he has gone through the necessary preparation, he will assume the yellow robe of the devout, to wear it perhaps for life, perhaps only for a day or two, but certainly to put it on, for
● [885] without this he cannot attain to the full privileges of a man.
[777] His kan (luck) will be altogether one-sided. All the ill deeds

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER V

TATTOOING

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WHATEVER his parents may think, the Burman youth considers the tattooing of his thighs quite as important a matter as his entry into a monastery. If he attains to the full dignity of humanity by becoming a shin, it is no less settled in his own mind that till he is tattooed in proper fashion there may be doubts as to his thorough manhood. Accordingly, very often at a tender age, varying with the spiritedness of his character, he begins to get figures tattooed on various parts of his thighs. When the operation is finished, the whole body from the waist, in a line with the navel, downwards to just beyond the knee-cap, is completely covered, the effect to the eye being not so much of a marking of the cuticle as of a skin-tight pair of *caleçons*, fitting better than the best glove ever made. The origin of the custom may or may not be the shameful reason assigned by foreign writers. No true Burman believes it. But in any case the tattooing looks very well on the olive skin, and I have heard English ladies admire it. The custom will probably never die out. There are, it is true, not a few puny Rangoonites, spiritless sons of the town, who do not get tattooed, but they are ashamed of it and take every opportunity of concealing their weakness. But there is not a single up-country man, not a solitary taw-tha, the sturdy inhabitants of the small towns and villages, who is not decorated with the dark blue tracery. They would as soon think of wearing a woman's skirt as of omitting to be tattooed, and they are strengthened in the feeling by the opinion of the girls themselves.

The operation is not by any means pleasant. In fact in

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

304 places such as the tender inside parts of the thigh and at
● 885 the joints of the knee, it needs more stoicism than most youths can command, to endure it without relieving the mind in speech. Therefore it is common to put the boy
[276] under the influence of opium while it is being done, though some parents will not allow this, for cases have occurred where the youth has died of an over-dose. For the same reason it is very seldom that more than three or four figures are done at a time. The part swells up a good deal, and there is danger of fever; besides that a few days afterwards the itchiness which supervenes is almost as intolerable as the first tattooing, while if the skin is broken by scratching there is not only a nasty sore, but the figure is spoilt. You not uncommonly hear of cases where the whole surface was finished at one sitting, but you only hear of them because it is unusual, and because the youth is proud of it.

304 The instrument used is a pricker about two feet long,
531 weighted at the top with a brass figure, sometimes plain, but in the case of good sayās, always carved more or less elaborately in the figure of a bird, a nat, or a bilu. The yat, or style part, is solid, with a round, sharp point, split up into four by long slits at right angles to each other, which serve to hold the colouring matter. This style is about four inches long and fits into a hollow pipe, which again joins it to the weighted end. Thus the length required for free work is gained without too great weight, except where it is wanted. The tattooer catches the pricker with his right hand, and guides the point with a rest formed by the forefinger and thumb of his left, the hand resting firmly on the person's body. The dye used is lampblack, the best being that obtained by the burning of sessamum oil, and this is mixed with water as it is wanted. Good sayās always sketch the outline of the figure roughly on the skin with an ordinary camel's-hair brush, and then the pattern is executed with a series of punctures close together, forming what afterwards fades into a rough line. Skilful men are very quick at it. I have had fifteen figures done in little over half an hour. But then Sayā Chein is a celebrated man.

The figures tattooed are those of all kinds of animals, tigers, cats, monkeys, and elephants being the commonest,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

828 ignorant man's heart is all in one mass, while that of the well-instructed divides itself into three small parts.

885 779 581 As models of married women are held up the Taw le-wa, the most faithful and beautiful of wives, the consorts of four of the chief princes in the ten great Jatakas, treating of the last births of the Lord Buddha. To say that a girl is Taw le-wa win lauk, calculated to become like one of these four great queens, Amaya the wife of Mahawthata, the Solomon of Buddhist kings; Madi, the wife of Wethandaya, world-famed for his charity; Keinnayi or Thanbula, the partners of princes hardly less celebrated, is to pay the highest possible compliment to any woman. But these are somewhat vague and intangible matters. There are other recommendations which appeal much more directly to those intending to get married; to the man that seeks a wife, sanshwe, pure as "test gold"; or the girl who would avoid a linkwe, a "cur of a husband."

581 787 Prominent among these is the rhyme of "the hostile pairs," the yan-hpet, who, if they marry, will certainly have a short life.

Some violence is done to the niceties of language in the linga, so that I may be allowed the same in the translation of a portion of it.

Friday's daughter
Didn't oughter
Marry with a Monday's son;
Should she do it
Both will rue it,
Life's last lap will soon be run.

The same lamentable result would follow if the man were born on Friday and the woman on Monday. Again:

Saturdays and Thursdays,
The serpent and the rat,
You cannot find out worse days,
Life's short enough at that.

The serpent and the rat preside over Saturday and Thursday respectively. Similar curtailment of life would follow if the union was between Sunday and Wednesday, or between Tuesday and the eighth half-day Yahu. One or

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

593 usual for both husband and wife to sign all deeds
562 they may have occasion to execute. Nothing more
421 free than a woman's position in the marriage state can be imagined. By law she is absolutely the mistress of her own property and her own self; and if it usually happens that the husband is the head of the house, that is because his nature gives him that position, not any law.

With us marriage means to a girl an utter breaking of her old ties, the beginning of a new life, of new duties, of new responsibilities. She goes out into a new and unknown world, full of strange facts, leaving one dependence for another, the shelter of a father for the shelter of a husband. She has even lost her own name, and becomes known but as the mistress of her husband; her soul is merged in his. But in Burma it is not so at all. She is still herself, still mistress of herself, an equal partner for life.

593 I have said that the Burmese have no ideals, and
● 885 this is true; but in the Laws of Manu there are laid
671 down some of the requisite qualities for a perfect wife. There are seven kinds of wife, say the Laws of Manu: a wife like a thief, like an enemy, like a master, like a friend, like a sister, like a mother, like a slave. The last four of these are good, but the last is the best, and these are some of her qualities:

'She should fan and soothe her master to sleep, and sit by him near the bed on which he lies. She will fear and watch lest anything should disturb him. Every noise will be a terror to her; the hum of a mosquito as the blast of a trumpet; the fall of a leaf without will sound as loud as thunder. Even she

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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ill guard her breath as it passes her lips to and
o, lest she awaken him whom she fears.

'And she will remember that when he awakens
e will have certain wants. She will be anxious
hat the bath be to his custom, that his clothes are
s he wishes, that his food is tasteful to him. Always
he will have before her the fear of his anger.'

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It must be remembered that the Laws of Manu
re of Indian origin, and are not totally accepted by
he Burmese. I fear a Burmese girl would laugh at
his ideal of a wife. She would say that if a wife
vere always afraid of her husband's wrath, she and
ie, too, must be poor things. A household is ruled
by love and reverence, not by fear. A girl has no
dea when she marries that she is going to be her
husband's slave, but a free woman, yielding to him in
those things in which he has most strength, and
taking her own way in those things that pertain to a
woman. She has a very keen idea of what things
she can do best, and what things she should leave
to her husband. Long experience has taught her
that there are many things she should not interfere
with; and she knows it is experience that has proved
it, and not any command. She knows that the reason
women are not supposed to interfere in public affairs
is because their minds and bodies are not fitted for
them. Therefore she accepts this, in the same way
as she accepts physical inferiority, as a fact against
which it is useless and silly to declaim, knowing that
it is not men who keep her out, but her own unfitness.
Moreover, she knows that it is made good to her in
other ways, and thus the balance is redressed. You
see, she knows her own strength and her own weak-

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

ness. Can there be a more valuable knowledge for anyone than this?

In many ways she will act for her husband with vigour and address, and she is not afraid of appearing in his name or her own in law courts, for instance, or in transacting certain kinds of business. She knows that she can do certain business as well as or better than her husband, and she does it. There is nothing more remarkable than the way in which she makes a division of these matters in which she can act for herself, and those in which, if she act at all, it is for her husband.

Thus, as I have said, she will, as regards her own property or her own business, act freely in her own name, and will also frequently act for her husband too. They will both sign deeds, borrow money on joint security, lend money repayable to them jointly. But in public affairs she will never allow her name to appear at all. Not that she does not take a keen interest in such things. She lives in no world apart; all that affects her husband interests her as keenly as it does him. She lives in a world of men and women, and her knowledge of public affairs, and her desire and powers of influencing them, is great. But she learnt long ago that her best way is to act through and by her husband, and that his strength and his name are her bucklers in the fight. Thus women are never openly concerned in any political matters. How strong their feeling is can better be illustrated by a story than in any other way.

In 1889 I was stationed far away on the north-west frontier of Burma, in charge of some four thousand square miles of territory which had been